REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 5, 8 and 9 are pending. Claims 1 and 8 are amended and claims 4, 6 and 7 are cancelled. Reconsideration and allowance based on the above amendments and following remarks are respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Kawabe, et al. (US 6,034,710). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, an optical printing apparatus comprising an exposure level conversion section for converting said image data into corresponding exposure level data indicative of a density of each pixel with a second gradation value greater than said first gradation value indicated by said image data, said conversion of said image data being based upon predetermined data correlating the image data to exposure level data stored in a conversion table, and outputting the exposure level data thus converted; and an exposure level correction section that corrects the exposure level data outputted from said exposure level conversion section using a correction factor for each element of said print head, the correction factor being based upon predetermined data stored in a correction table that correlates the exposure level for each element of said print head with an optimal exposure level, and outputting correlated exposure level data; and a head driving section being connection to receive said corrected exposure level data from said exposure level correction section and driving, based on said corrected exposure level

data, each element of said print head to exposure said photosensitive printing medium in such manner that a quantity of light corresponding to said corrected exposure level data is exposed to said photosensitive printing medium, thereby forming a pixel of a density corresponding to said corrected exposure level data on said photosensitive printing medium.

As recited in claim 1, the printing apparatus converts image data into exposure level data based on the density of each pixel within a gradation value where the correction data is predetermined from image data that is correlated to the exposure level as predetermined data being stored in a conversion table. The exposure level data is then corrected to correspond to each element of the print head. This ensures accurate exposure levels based upon the abilities of the print head. The correction data for each element of the print head is based upon the print head characteristics and predetermined and stored in a correction table. Thus, the optical printing apparatus includes two (2) separate tables a conversion and a correction table each containing different data that has been predetermined based upon either the image data or the characteristics of the print head. This data is then used to provide the correct exposure level data for the image data.

In contrast, Kawabe teaches an apparatus that includes a plurality of recording elements aligned, such as red, green and blue light elements, that are independently driven so as to be able to conduct an on/off exposure independently. For each of the recording elements, a light amount data is

obtained based on the density of an image signal. A correction value is then obtained based on a current reading of light received from the print heads at sensors 55. Signals received at the sensors are processed through an arithmetic process to obtain the calculated correction data. This data is then stored in a look-up table. The signal data is then corrected based upon the correction data. See column 12, lines 4-55.

Thus, Kawabe obtains corrected data based upon light intensity currently provided by the print heads and stored in a look-up table. Kawabe does not provide an exposure level conversion section that provides exposure level data based on predetermined data stored in a conversion table and an exposure level correction section that corrects the exposure level data based upon predetermined data relating to the characteristics of the print head that is stored in a correction table. In fact, it appears that only correction data, in Kawabe, is based upon current light received from the print heads and stored in a table. Thus, the use of two separate tables, a conversion table and correction table, is not taught by Kawabe. Therefore, the combined features of applicant's independent claim 1 are not taught by Kawabe.

Thus in view of the above, Kawabe fails to teach each and every feature of the claimed invention as required. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

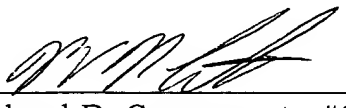
Conclusion

For at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-3, 5 and 8-9 are distinguishable over the cited art. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Chad J. Billings (Reg. No. 48,917) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By 
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Attachment(s)